



Healthy Aging in Neighborhoods of Diversity across the Life Span

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The Healthy Journey

handls.nih.gov
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH • NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON AGING

MAJOR DEPRESSION

If you are feeling sad or angry, you may have depression. Depression is an illness that involves mood, thoughts, and even the body. It can change the way people feel about themselves, and the way they think about things. People who are depressed may also eat more or less than usual or sleep more or less than usual. Depression is not the same as just feeling blue. It is not a sign of weakness. People cannot simply “get over it” and get better. Symptoms may last for weeks, months, or years if they are not treated. Like any serious medical problem, *depression needs to be treated*. Treatment can help most people who suffer from depression.

Treatment can help most people who suffer from depression

Many people who have had depression once will have depression again. You may begin to feel depression coming on weeks before you feel all of the symptoms. Learning these early signs and working with your doctor may prevent your depression from getting worse.

Cause of depression

There is no single cause for depression. It often results from a combination of things. You may have no idea why you are depressed. Depression is related to physical

changes in the brain. It is caused when there is an imbalance in chemicals that carry signals in your brain. These chemicals are called neurotransmitters.

Most people don't know why they feel depressed

Some common risks for depression are:

- **Family history.** Having someone in your family with depression increases the chances that you will suffer from depression.
- **Trauma and stress.** Stresses in your life can bring on depression. Things like money problems, family problems, or the death of a loved one can bring on depression. You can also become depressed after changes in your life, like having a baby, losing a job, or retiring from a job.
- **Pessimistic personality.** People who are down on themselves and have a negative outlook are more likely to become depressed.
- **Medical illnesses.** Serious medical illnesses like heart disease, cancer, and HIV can lead to depression. Depression can make medical illnesses worse. Depression may make your immune system

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weaker and can make pain harder to take. In some cases, depression can be caused by medications used to treat medical illnesses.

- **Other psychological disorders.** Anxiety disorders, eating disorders, schizophrenia, and drug and alcohol abuse often go hand in hand with depression.

Depression has symptoms that interfere with enjoying every day life

Symptoms of depression

Major depression has many symptoms that may interfere with working, sleeping, eating, and enjoying daily life. Many people feel like they have no energy and can't concentrate. Others feel irritable or angry all the time but for no real reason. Different people have different symptoms. If you feel "down" for more than 2 weeks, and these feelings are interfering with your usual activities, you may be clinically depressed.

Here is a list of symptoms of depression. Not everyone has all of the symptoms all of the time.

- Sad, anxious, or "empty" mood most of the time
- Feeling hopeless or having a poor outlook on life
- Feeling guilty, worthless and helpless
- Loss of interest in hobbies and activities that you used to enjoy, including sex
- Low energy, tiredness and feeling "slowed down"
- Problems concentrating, remembering, and making decisions
- Unable to sleep, waking up early, or sleeping too much
- Not feeling like eating or eating too much
- Feeling restless, irritable or angry
- Physical problems that do not go away with treatment, such as headaches, stomach problems, and chronic pain
- Thoughts of death or suicide; suicide attempts

If you are having some of these symptoms, you should talk to your doctor about whether you are suffering from depression.

If you are having thoughts of suicide, please call your doctor or go to your local hospital or emergency room.

Who suffers from depression?

People may feel alone when they are depressed. Anyone can suffer from depression but the symptoms may be different depending on your age and sex.

- Women are almost two times as likely to become depressed as men. This may be due partly to hormonal changes brought on by puberty, menstruation, menopause, and pregnancy.
- Men are as less likely to be depressed but they are also less likely to seek help if they are depressed. They are more likely to feel angry and hostile, and they tend to treat their depression with alcohol or drug abuse. Suicide is a very serious risk for men with depression. They are four times more likely than women to kill themselves.
- When people become older, they may lose loved ones and they may have to adjust to living alone. They may suffer from physical illnesses or they may be less active than they were. These changes may lead to depression. Loved ones may think signs of depression are part of normal aging. Many older people are also less likely to talk about their symptoms. This can result in older people not getting treatment for their depression.

Treatment

Although there is treatment for depression, many people never get help. Treating depression is very important because it affects you, your family, and your work. Some people with depression try to harm themselves because they believe that they cannot change how they feel. Depression is a treatable illness. If you have symptoms of depression, see a doctor or person that you trust, such as your clergy.

If you work with your doctor, you can learn to manage depression. Your doctor may put you on an antidepressant medication to help control your moods. You may have to try a few different medications to find the one that works best for you. Your doctor may also ask you to meet with a therapist to talk about your depression.

Things to remember

Depression is more common than you think.

Depression is a treatable illness.

Change won't come overnight. With the right treatment, you can keep depression from taking over your life.

How your visit to the HANDLS MRVs can help you treat your depression

On the MRVs, one of the questionnaires measures whether you feel depressed. If you get a high score on this measure, the doctor will talk with you about your feelings. She will also give you the name of a doctor that you can talk with about feelings of depression. If you do not have insurance, we can help you find a doctor who will see you at a reduced cost. Also, if you think you have symptoms of depression, you can talk with the doctor about your feelings.

RESOURCES FOR MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMERS

Below is a list of some of the mental health services or clinics located in Baltimore City. This list is not complete. HANDLS does not recommend any particular group but we provide them for your information and convenience:

To get a full listing of Mental Health Clinics, please contact Baltimore Mental Health Systems, Inc. at 410-837-2647 or call First Call for Help at 410-685-0525.

Baltimore Mental Health Systems, Inc.
201 E. Baltimore St
Baltimore MD 21202

410-837-2647
410-837-2672 Fax

<http://www.bmhsi.org>

Their goal is to ensure that Baltimore City residents have easy access to a range of mental health services. Visit their website or call them to get a full listing of services available in Baltimore City.

First Call for Help
410-685-0525 or 1-800-492-0618

Information and referral 24 hours a day sponsored by the United Way of Central Maryland. Answers to all kinds of questions about resources in Maryland and Washington, D.C.

Baltimore Crisis Response, Inc. (BCRI; Baltimore City):

410- 433-5255

Hotline: Available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week, the hotline provides help to people who are having a psychiatric crisis and to people who are homeless.

Crisis Team Services: From 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. 7 days/week, the Crisis Team will go to where the individual is located to provide crisis services.

North Baltimore Center
2225 N. Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218

410-366-4360 (press option 3 for outpatient Mental Health Clinic)

Bon Secours

Bon Secours Mental Health Services are available at Bon Secours Hospital, the Community Institute of Behavioral Services at Liberty Village and New Phases Center. The Mobile Assertive Services for the Homeless (MASH) provides care for patients who unwilling or unable to use traditional mental health services.

Crisis Center/Central Intake - 410-362-3573

University of Maryland Medical Systems

At the Institute of Psychiatry and Human Behavior, the Department administers outpatient clinics for adult, geriatric and child and adolescent psychiatry, an adult day hospital and a Methadone Maintenance Program. Contact:

- Adult Outpatient: Connie Noll, RN, MS
410-328-6071
- Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (UMMS)
410-328-0128

Services for Veterans

The Maryland VA Medical Center has a general outpatient clinic, substance abuse services, a post-traumatic stress disorder clinic and a consultation liaison service. Contact:

- General Outpatient Clinics: Patsy Williams
410-605-7360
- Substance Abuse and Trauma Services:

Shirley Marrero 410-605-7000, ext 5535

Chase Brexton
Mt. Vernon Center
1001 Cathedral Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
410-837-2050

Hours:

Mt. Vernon Center
Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 9 am – 8 pm
Wednesday and Friday 9 am – 5 pm
Please call 410-837-2050, ext. 2428 for more information
or to make an appointment.

Baltimore Medical Systems, Inc.

BMS, Inc. has several federal qualified health center locations throughout Baltimore City. To reach any of the 8 locations please call the main office for BMS, Inc and they

will connect with the center nearest where you live.

Federal Qualified Health Centers
410-732-8800 – Main office

Health Care for the Homeless
111 Park Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21201
410-837-5533

People's Community Health Center
3028 Greenmount Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21218
410-467-6040

(Several locations throughout Baltimore City)

Family Heath Center of Baltimore
Outpatient Mental Health Clinic C&A/Adults
634 Cherry Hill Rd.

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BLUEBERRY POWER

Researchers at the USDA Human Nutrition Center have found that blueberries rank #1 in antioxidant activity when compared to 40 other fresh fruits and vegetables. Antioxidants help neutralize harmful by-products of metabolism called “free radicals” that can lead to cancer and other age related diseases. Ongoing brain research shows that blueberries may improve motor skills and actually reverse the short-term memory loss that comes with aging.

Spiced Blueberry Crumble Pie (serves 6 persons)

4 cups fresh or frozen, thawed blueberries

½ cup sugar, divided

9 tablespoons flour, divided

¼ cup quick cooking oats

¼ cup walnuts, chopped

2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice*

5 tablespoons margarine, cut into small pieces

Directions:

Preheat oven to 375°F.

In a 9 inch pie plate, toss blueberries with ¼ cup sugar and 1 tablespoons flour, spread evenly into the pie plate.

In a medium bowl, combine the remaining 8 tablespoons flour, oats, walnuts, pumpkin pie spice, and remaining ¼ cup sugar. Using a pastry blender or two knives, cut the margarine into this mixture until moist crumbs form. Press the crumbs together with our fingers to make large chunks, place on top of blueberries.

Bake in the oven until the topping is browned, about 20 minutes.

Cool on a rack.

*To make your own pumpkin pie spice, combine 1 ¼ tsp ground cinnamon, ¼ tsp ground ginger, ¼ tsp ground nutmeg, and ¼ tsp ground allspice.

For more recipes, visit these websites

<http://www.wildblueberries.com/recipes.php>

<http://www.blueberry.org/recipes.htm>

FOCUS ON THE HANDLS STAFF

Neuropsychology testers

Angela Graham is a native Baltimorean. She has been giving memory and problem solving tests for the National Institute on Aging for 7 years. She has been testing on the HANDLS Mobile Research Vehicles (MRVs) for 6 years. Angela prefers working on long-term research studies like HANDLS and the Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Aging. She is also a former participant in longitudinal research.

Joyce Hartley has been with the HANDLS project since 2003. She's been a resident of the Baltimore area for 17 years, and she is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Experimental Psychology.

Elizabeth Burke has been giving memory and problem solving tests for the National Institute on Aging for almost 15 years. Liz has been testing on the HANDLS MRVs since 2000. She enjoys meeting new participants and getting to know the different Baltimore neighborhoods in the HANDLS Study. Liz lives in the Gardenville area of Baltimore City with her husband and two children.

Deborah Colby has been giving problem solving and memory tests for the Baltimore Longitudinal Study on Aging for 2 years. She has been testing on the HANDLS MRVs for 1 year. Debbie enjoys testing the participants and learning new things about the different areas of Baltimore. She has a Bachelors degree in Psychology that she earned from the University of Maryland Baltimore County in

2000. She earned a Master's degree in Experimental Psychology from Towson University in 2005.

Jennifer Emel has been giving memory tests for the Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Aging for 1 year. She will be testing on the HANDLS MRVs in the near future. Jennifer loves testing the participants and hearing all the interesting stories they tell. She received her Bachelor's degree from Mount St. Mary's University in 2005. She is currently pursuing her Master's in Experimental Psychology at Towson University.

Dr. Melissa Kitner-Triolo has been with the HANDLS study since the pilot study began in 2000. She is a research psychologist who manages the memory testing on the MRV. Her research interests include testing older adults and finding ways to predict normal and non-normal memory in elders from diverse backgrounds. She works mostly behind the scenes analyzing data and making sure things run smoothly. You may see her on the vehicle from time to time as she likes to stay connected with the HANDLS study participants.

Dr. Kitner-Triolo is a Baltimore native. She graduated from Parkville High School and received both her Bachelors and Masters degrees from Towson University. She received her Ph.D. in Psychological Sciences from Virginia Tech. She also completed a Graduate Certificate in Aging. In her time off, Dr. Kitner-Triolo enjoys gardening, reading, exercising and spending time with her husband, two children, Eliza and Zachary, and cat, Bozwell.



Neuropsychology testers (from left), Angela Graham, Joyce Hartley, Elizabeth Burke, Deborah Colby, and Jennifer Emel



Melissa Kitner-Triolo, PhD

HANDLS PARTICIPANTS

Have you moved? Are you planning to move?

It is important to us that we know exactly how to contact our participants. HANDLS is a longitudinal study. We will examine the same participants approximately every 3 years over the next 20 years.

We would like you to let us know if you have moved or if you are planning on moving soon. You may call us toll-free at 1-866-207-8363 (option 7) and we will take your change of address information over the phone.

If you prefer, you may complete the change of address form and mail it to us at:

HANDLS Study Change of Address
National Institute on Aging
5600 Nathan Shock Drive - Mailbox 6
Baltimore, MD 21224

Our continuing contact with you is the key to the HANDLS study. Thank you so much for taking time to let us know how to stay in touch with you.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Mental Health Resources, continued from page 4

Baltimore, MD 21225
410 354-2000 option 2 and then 5

Maryland Pharmacy Program (MPP)

Persons who are not Medicare beneficiaries and are not eligible for full Medicaid benefits may qualify for coverage of pharmacy benefits through the Maryland Pharmacy Assistance Program (MPAP). MPAP helps low-income individuals pay for the full range of pharmacy services covered under the Medical Assistance Program. The Program covers people with incomes at or below 116% of the federal poverty level (FPL) for one person (or 100% for 2 or more) with assets no more than \$4,000 for one person (or \$6,000 for 2 or more).

For more information about the Maryland Pharmacy Assistance Program eligibility and enrollment, please refer to <http://www.dhmh.state.md.us/mma/mpap> or call them at the Maryland Pharmacy Assistance Program 410-767-5394.

Free Medication Programs

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HANDLS Change of Address

Name _____

Old address _____

New address _____

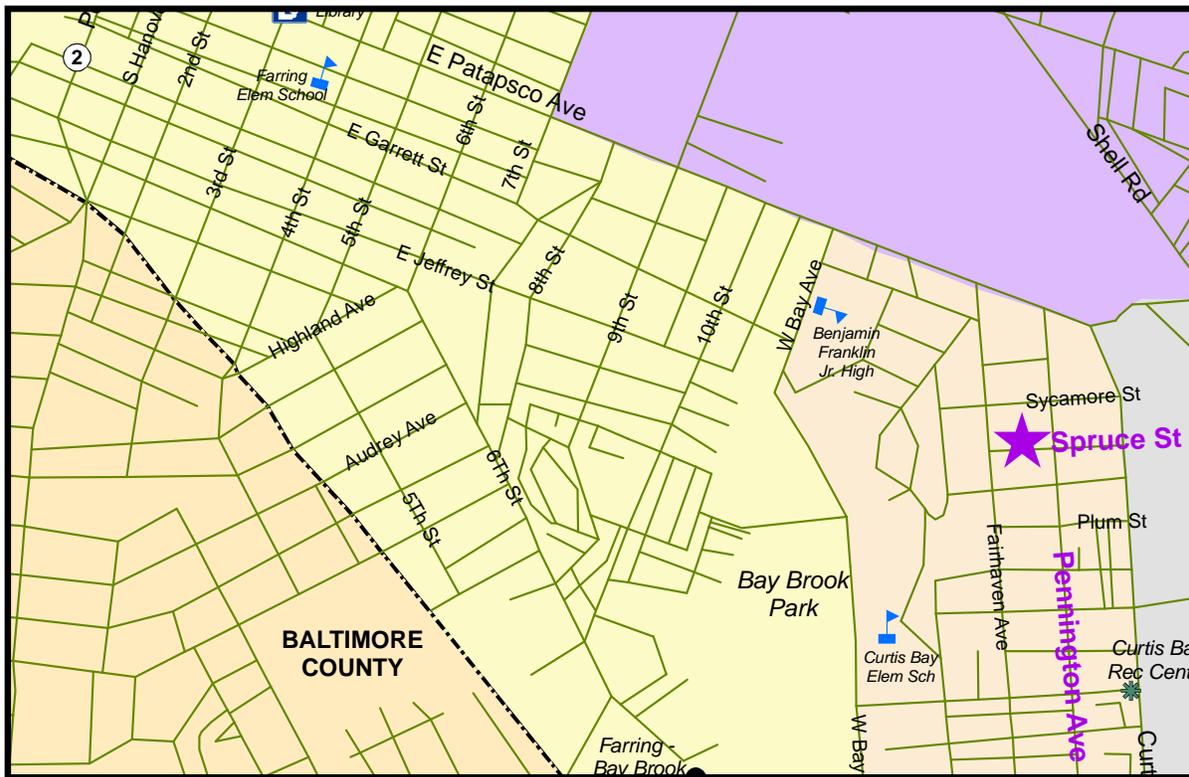
Old area code & phone number _____

New area code & phone number _____

MRV location at last visit _____



OUR PRESENT LOCATION



We will be parked next to the BGE property on the corners of Pennington Avenue and Spruce Streets in the fall.

Mental Health Resources, continued from page 6

There are some pharmaceutical companies that offer free medications to low-income families. They require a doctor’s consent and proof of your financial status. Depending on what your insurance covers, you may be able to apply. A few companies even allow family incomes as high as \$40,000 annually (offset by expenses, of course). For more information about types of psychotropic medications and corresponding companies that feature patient-assistance programs please call the MEDBANK of Maryland, Inc. at 1-877-435-7755 and ask to speak to one of their patient service representatives or visit their website www.medbankmd.org

Important information for accessing outpatient mental health services if you are ineligible for medical assistance

Mental Hygiene Administration Policy

Medical Assistance Ineligible Outpatient Mental Health Services

Effective July 1, 2002, the requirements for accessing outpatient mental health services for non-Medicaid recipients (formerly called Grey Zone) changed. In order for a provider to be eligible for reimbursement through Maryland Health Partners (MHP) an individual must be an active participant in the Maryland Pharmacy Assistance (MPA) program. However, there is recognition that there are certain groups of individuals that may not have Pharmacy Assistance who are priority populations for the Public Mental Health System (PMHS). These individuals should be seen and services will be reimbursed through MHP in the usual manner even if they are not currently enrolled in the MPA program.

For additional information about these services please contact the Baltimore Mental Health Systems, Inc. at 410-837-2647.

The Quarterly Newsletter for the HANDLS Community Healthy Aging in Neighborhoods of Diversity across the Life Span

The purpose of this study is to learn about changes in health over time. Using our medical research vehicles, we want to study as many people with different backgrounds as we can. We want this study to help us understand healthy aging by examining the effects of different backgrounds on changes in health over time. The information that we gather will help improve health and prevent disabilities. We want to do this for people from all backgrounds, particularly those in poor and minority communities.

**For information about our study call 1-866-207-8363
or visit our website hands.nih.gov**



HANDLS
National Institute on Aging
5600 Nathan Shock Drive
Baltimore MD 21224-6825